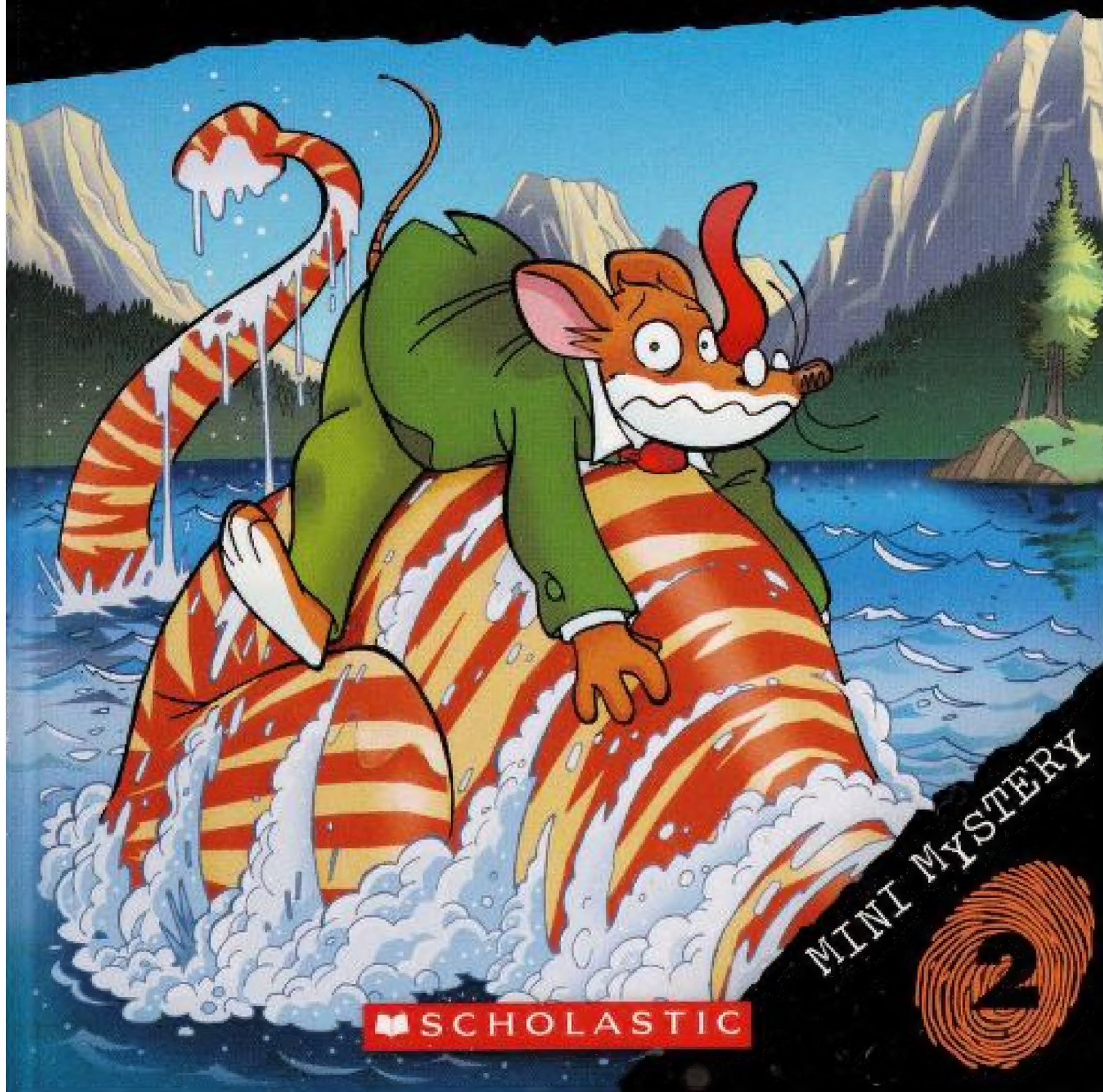




Geronimo Stilton

THE LAKE MONSTER



MINI MYSTERY



 **SCHOLASTIC**

Dear mouse friends,
Welcome to the world of



Geronimo Stilton

MINI MYSTERY





THE RODENT'S GAZETTE
EDITORIAL STAFF





Geronimo Stilton

A learned and brainy mouse; editor of *The Rodent's Gazette*



Thea Stilton

Geronimo's sister and special correspondent at *The Rodent's Gazette*



Trap Stilton

An awful joker; Geronimo's cousin and owner of the store Cheap Junk for Less



Benjamin Stilton

A sweet and loving nine-year-old mouse; Geronimo's favorite nephew

Geronimo Stilton

THE LAKE MONSTER



Scholastic Inc.

TURN ON YOUR TV RIGHT AWAY!

It was a warm **spring** morning. I was feeding my dear **little fishy**, Hannibal, when — Oh, pardon me, I almost forgot to introduce myself! My name is Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton*. I run *The Rodent's Gazette*, the most famous newspaper on Mouse Island.



Now, where was I? Oh, yes, I was feeding Hannibal when the phone **rang**. I was so startled I accidentally dumped **too much** food into his tank.

“Geronimo, it’s Thea. Turn on your TV right away! I’ll call you back in a minute!” It was my sister, Thea. **What could possibly be so urgent?**



I had just hung up the phone when it **rang** again. As soon as I answered, I heard a **shout** so loud it made me knock half the fish food onto the floor.

“Grandson, it’s me! Turn on your

TV **IMMEDIATELY!** Go on now, move those paws! I'll call you back in a minute!" It was my grandfather William Shortpaws, founder of *The Rodent's Gazette*. **What could possibly be so urgent?**



I was heading toward my TV when the phone rang again. I was so surprised I **JUMPED** into the air, and a good bit of fish food fell into my open snout.

"Hi, G! Are you **WATCHING** TV?"

"Blugh . . . phug . . . ptui . . . ptui . . .," I responded, **spitting** out the fish food.

"What?!" she said. "**Turn on your**



TV right away! I'll call you back in a minute."

It was **Petunia Pretty Paws**! She is the most fascinating mouse I know. She's a TV journalist who has dedicated her life to defending the environment. **But what could possibly be so urgent?**

I had just picked up the remote control when the doorbell **rang**.

I tripped on the carpet, and the rest of the fish food went **flying** . . . everywhere!



Hannibal



BREAKING NEWS!

I **opened** my front door and was immediately run over by two tiny **CYCLONES!**

“**Hurry**, Uncle Geronimo, turn on your TV!” they exclaimed.

It took me a moment to recover from my **surprise**. By then, my adorable nephew **BENJAMIN** and his friend Bugsy Wugsy, Petunia Pretty Paws’s niece, were curled up on my couch.

“Hello, my little **cheese niblets**,” I said affectionately. “Would one of you mind telling me wha —”

“Sssh!” **hissed** Buggy Wuggy.

I turned my attention to the TV screen.
A newscaster was interviewing **Sally Ratmoussen**, my number one enemy!

“When did you see the **MONSTER** for the first time?” the newscaster asked.

“As I said, a friend of mine who lives on the lake saw it yesterday, and he called



me **AT ONCE** to tell me about it!”

“Could you tell us what it looks like?”
the newscaster asked.

“Listen, if you want to know that, I suggest you go buy the **special edition** of my newspaper, *The Daily Rat*. Right now! At once! Immediately!”

“Do you have **PHOTOS** of it?”

“Of course! There is a huge picture of the **LAKE MONSTER** on the front page!”

Oh, for the love of cheese! Had I heard correctly? A lake monster? And *The Daily Rat*, our rival newspaper, was coming out with a **special edition** about it? I had a feeling I’d be hearing from Grandfather William about this.

THERE'S NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE!

A split second later, the telephone began to **ring**. As I'd suspected, the first to call me back was Grandfather William. He was shouting even more

loudly than before. "Hello, Grandson? Did you hear? You need to leave for the lake right away! Move it! **THERE'S NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE!**"



“But, Grandfather, you know **I hate to travel. . . .**”

It was too late to protest. He’d already hung up.

Next Thea called me back. “Gerry Berry, did you hear the news? We need to leave right away! **THERE’S NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE!** I’ll be right over.”

“But, Thea, you know **I hate to travel. . . .**”

It was too late to protest. She’d already hung up.

Petunia Pretty Paws was the last to call. “Hi, G! Did you hear? We can’t miss out on a chance like this! It could be a rare animal we thought was extinct!



We need to leave right away. **THERE'S NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE!** I'll be right over."

This time, I didn't even try to protest. **I hate to travel**, but I would do anything for Petunia!

I was lost in a daydream about a **romantic** canoe ride with Petunia when I felt someone tugging at my **JACKET**. It was Benjamin and Bugsy.

“Uncle Geronimo, can we come, too?” asked Benjamin.

“I don’t know, Benjamin,” I said. “It could be **DANGEROUS**”

“Come on, Uncle G!” Bugsy pleaded. “Nothing bad will happen as long as you’re there to protect us.”

Their furry little faces were so hopeful I just couldn’t let them down. So I **hugged** Benjamin and Bugsy and said, “Oh, all right. We’ll go find the **LAKE MONSTER** together!”

LEAVING FOR THE LAKE

We decided it would be best to **TRAVEL** together in Petunia's car. Since I am a true gentlemouse, I let Thea sit in the front seat, while I climbed in **BACK** with Bugsy, **BENJAMIN**, and all our baggage.



“Are you comfy, Geronimo?” asked Petunia, looking in her rearview mirror.

“**Mpffh . . .**”

flibb!” I responded. My snout was full of the **synthetic cat fur** on Thea’s suitcase.

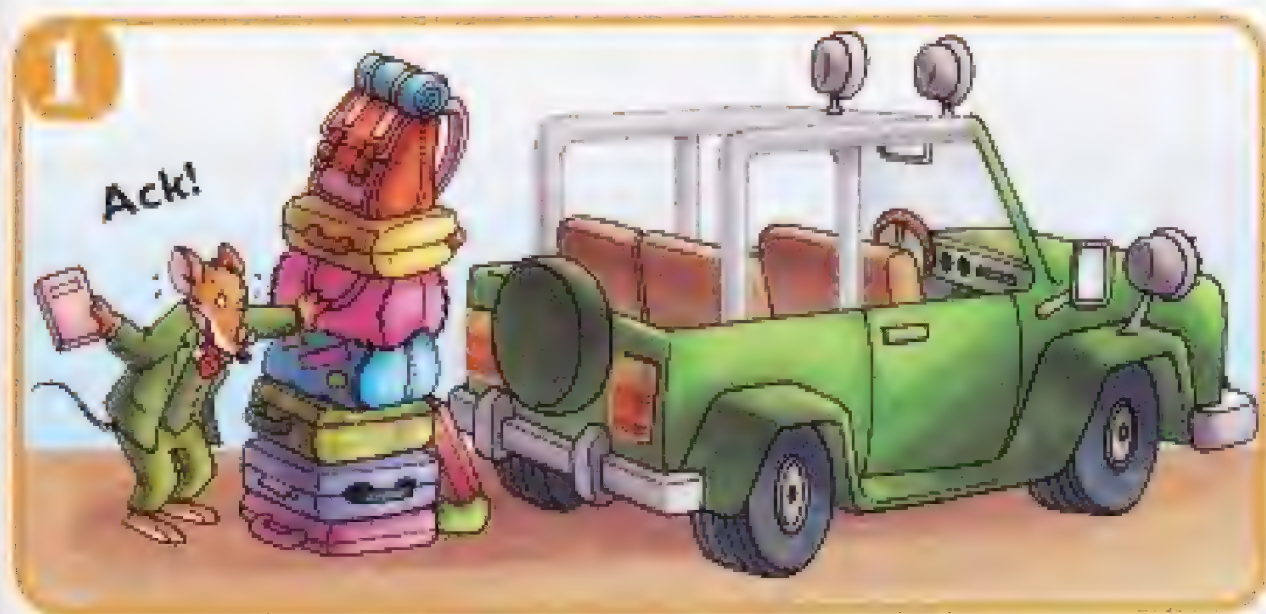
Petunia gave me a funny smile. “You know, G, you’re squeaking very strangely today.”

“That’s because my brother is a **very strange** mouse,” Thea declared. “Don’t tell me you’ve never noticed.”

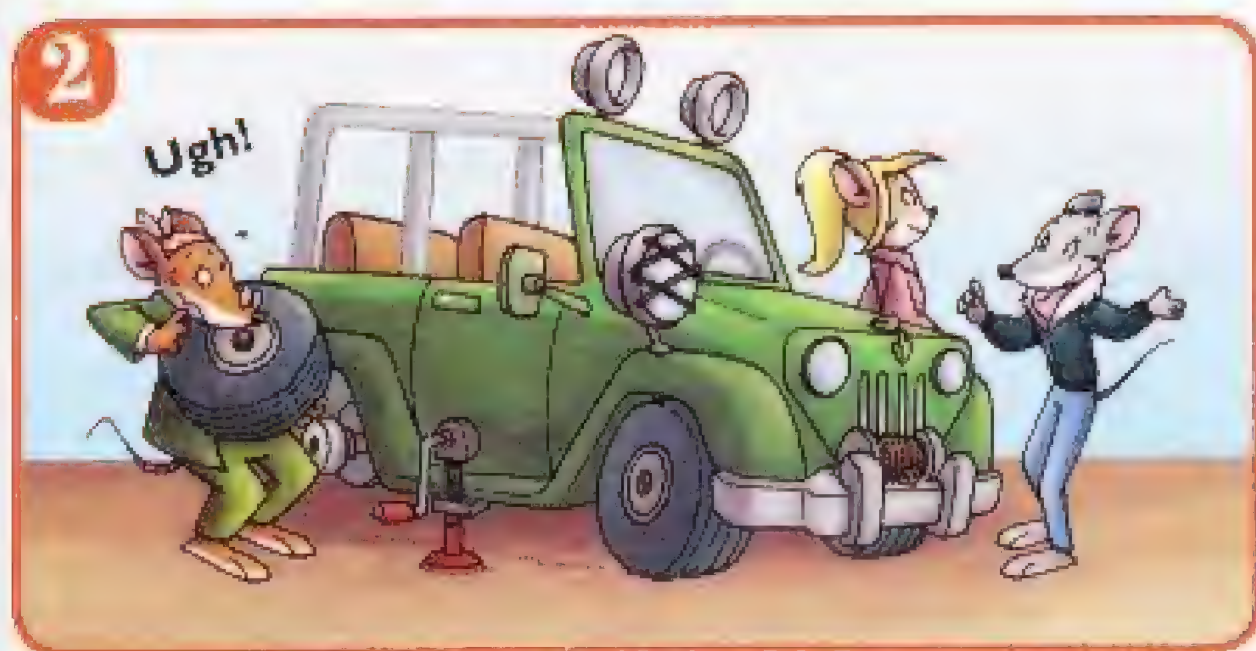
Petunia and Thea took turns driving. They spent the whole ride **chatting**, while Benjamin and Buggy passed the time playing Rat, Paper, Scissors.

Petunia stopped three times to let us stretch our **paws**. For me, that turned out to be three times too many!

At the **first stop**, I had to unload and reload all the luggage to get Petunia's notebook from the very bottom bag.



At the **second stop**, I had to change a flat tire all by myself while Petunia and Thea just stood there yammering away.




At the **third stop**, everything went smoothly . . . until we tried to leave, that is. We ran out of gas, and I had to push the car the rest of the way!



But for Petunia, I would have climbed **CHEDDAR CRAG** with one paw tied behind my tail. And without complaining, either!

AT THE GOLDEN CATFISH

At the lake, there was a nasty surprise waiting for us: Every **TELEVISION STATION**  and newspaper on Mouse Island had sent **REPORTERS** and **photographers**! Plus, many curious rodents were visiting. There were mice everywhere, and everyone was talking about the **LAKE MONSTER**.

We made our way to the only hotel in the area, **THE GOLDEN CATFISH**, where the rooms were going like hot cheese buns. Fortunately, Thea had reserved five beds ahead of time.



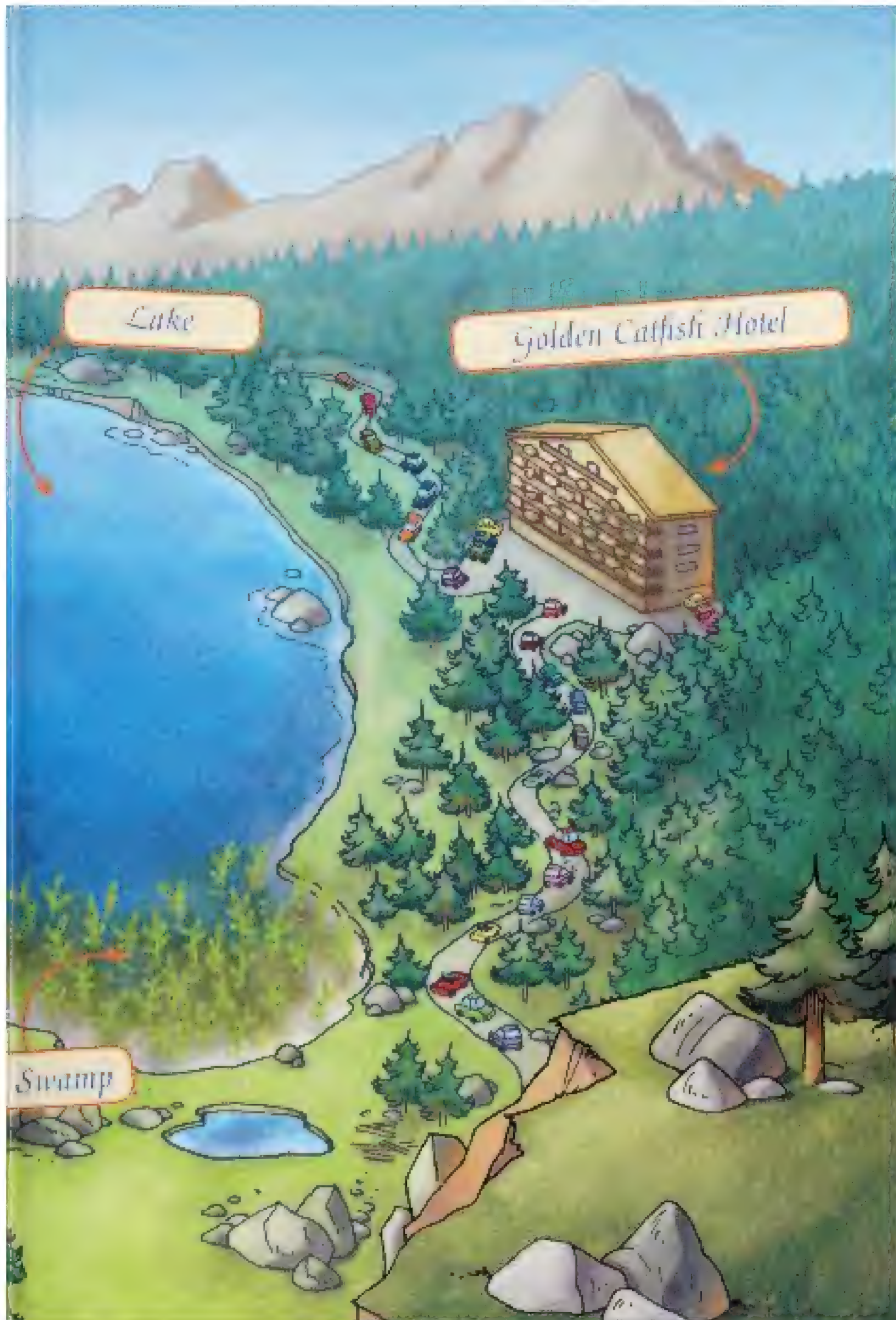
Islet

Castle ruins

Lake

Golden Catfish Hotel

Swamp



The hotel's **manager**, followed by two rodents who were as thin as string cheese, came to meet us.

“Good evening, *heh heh heh!* My name is **SAMUEL SWEETWATER**, and I am the manager of the Golden Catfish.



Welcome! Did you have a nice trip?"

"Yes, it was fabumouse!" my friends responded. I couldn't **squeak** a word since I was still trying to catch my breath after pushing the car.

"Is this gentlemouse with you?"

Sweetwater asked, pointing to me.

"Yes, of course . . . *pant* . . . , " I responded. "My name is . . . *pant* . . . Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton* . . . *pant* . . . *pant* . . . "

"Geronimo Stilton? The famouse writer? It is a real **HONOR** to have you here with us!" he said, shaking my paw vigorously. "This place really needs a bit of **publicity**, *heh heh heh*! I was



very lucky to be down by the lake **LAST WEEK** when the monst —”

“Last week!” I exclaimed. “But on the news they said that the **MONSTER** was first seen yesterday.”

Sweetwater stammered, “Um — yes, that is — I meant to say — last **NIGHT.**”

“And you were the one to **contact** Ms. Ratmousen?” I asked, finally able

to free myself from his **PAWSHAKE**.

“Yes,” he replied. “Sally — I mean, Ms. **Ratmousen** — is an old acquaintance of mine. When she heard the **news**, she wanted to buy the exclusive rights to the story. She pays very well, you know.”

“My **newspaper** pays very well, too,” I said.

“Of course, *heh heh heh!*” Sweetwater **sneered**. “But you see, Mr. Stilton, I’ve known Sally — I mean, Ms. Ratmousen — for so many years that I immediately thought of her.”

He was still squeaking when my cell phone **rang**. Grandfather William thundered, “Grandson, are you at the

lake yet? **MOVE THAT TAIL!**”

“Yes, Grandfather, I —”

“It’s about time! I’ve sent up a photographer. He’s there, waiting for you. **SO MOVE THOSE PAWS!**”

“But, Grandfather, I —”

“No thanks necessary, Grandson!



You can show your gratitude by getting busy out there! I want **PICTURES** of this monster by **TOMORROW** night! **SO MOVE IT!**”

“Grandfather, can you listen for a —?”

But he had already hung up. Rats!

“If you follow me, I’ll show you to your rooms, *heh heh heh!*” **SAMUEL SWEETWATER** said. He turned to the two thin *rodents*. “**ZIP! ZAP!** Take these bags inside.”

CLUE 1

What did Samuel Sweetwater say about the monster that seemed a bit strange?

AN ATTIC FIT FOR A KING

As we headed to our rooms, Mr. Sweetwater turned to squeak with us. “Unfortunately, I only have one four-rodent room left. For the fifth, I thought of a **simple but comfortable** solution.

Like the gentlemouse I am, I accepted the “simple but comfortable” solution.

“Follow me to the **ATTIC**, Mr. Stilton.”

“The *attic*?” I asked, lugging my bag up the **STAIRS**.
Why, oh, why



hadn't I stayed home?

"The bathroom is on the first floor, only **ten flights**

of stairs down. For an athletic rodent like yourself, I'm sure it will be nothing, *heh!* Naturally, the **HOT** water will cost you just a little bit extra. . . ."

Why, oh, why hadn't I stayed home?

"Is the bed **soft**?"

I asked.

"The mattress is **natural straw!**



Just be careful of the holes in the roof — some **BATS** might come in. . . .”

Bats?!? Why, oh, why hadn't I stayed home?

Samuel Sweetwater threw open the door to the attic. “You and your roommate will do just fine here!”

As I stepped in, a powerful **FLASH** blinded me!

“My name is **Stevie Snapson**, and I never botch my shot!” my new roommate declared.

This had to be the **photographer** that Grandfather William had sent.





SALLY'S PHOTOGRAPHER

When I went down for dinner, more **unpleasant** surprises awaited me.

SALLY RATMOUSEN →

was seated at the table next to ours. As soon as she saw me, she attacked. "Stilton! What in the name of cheddar are **you** doing here?"



"I'm here to photograph the **LAKE MONSTER**, Sally," I responded.

"You're a little **LATE**, old friend.

This time, I've got the scoop. **LOOK!**" She shoved a photo of the monster **UNDER** my snout. It was



hard to see it too clearly because of the **fog**, but it really was quite **striking**.

"Let me introduce you to the author of this masterpiece," Sally declared. "This is **Ricky Zoomson**, my best photographer."

A scrawny rodent poked out from behind her. He shot me a **smirk**.

Trying to remain **calm**, I responded,

“Well, Sally, you’ve made the first move, but the next **PHOTO** will be ours. You can bet on it!”



Ricky Zoomson

“I don’t think so! Anyway, the **MONSTER** won’t show his snout until tomorrow at **dawn**,” Sally replied.

“How do you know that?” I demanded.

But she had already **STOMPED** away. This situation was getting **stranger** by the second!

I sat down at our table, but I couldn’t take my **EYES** off that photo of the monster. The more I looked at it, the

more convinced I became that something wasn't right.

As soon as Petunia saw the photo, she **exclaimed**, "What an unusual-looking monster! There's definitely something **fishy** about it. . . ."

That worried me. "Do you think it could be **dangerous**?"

"Don't go all 'fraidy mouse on me!" exclaimed Thea. "We'll think about the **MONSTER** tomorrow. Let's get some shut-eye!"

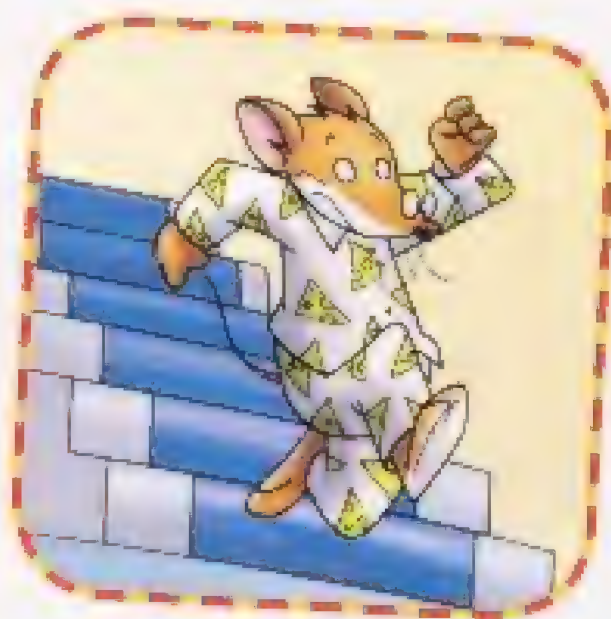
CLUE 2

Before Sally left, what did she say that was strange?

A BATHROOM, QUIIIICK!

It wasn't a very peaceful night for me, dear reader. **Stevie Snapson** snored louder than my uncle Nibbles when he has a cold. Plus, anytime I managed to nod off for more than a few minutes, I dreamed of the **MONSTER**.

Suddenly, I had a **very urgent** need . . . to go to the bathroom!



I raced down ten flights of stairs, but tripped over the last step . . .

I raced down the **ten** flights of stairs that separated me from the first floor, but I tripped over the last **step** and landed in front of the hotel entrance.

Just when I thought there was no way I was going to make it, I saw a **yellow arrow** pointing to the bathroom.

I scurried in as quickly as I could!

That's when I heard some squeaking from the next room.

"Why do we need to wear oxygen



... and landed on my tail in front of the hotel entrance!

masks?" said a voice.

"Because this time the **MONSTER** will stay underwater. Only the head will appear. We can't let anyone see the **broken** tail!"

"Let's go. Boss said not to be late!"

I snuck out to see who was *talking*, but I must have just missed them!

Who were they? How did they know so much about the monster? And who was their **boss**?

The door was open, so I peeked inside the room. I spotted wet suits, flippers, masks, and other underwater **GEAR**. Things were getting **stranger and stranger!**

AN ANONYMOUSE NOTE

I raced up to the attic and tried to wake Stevie. No luck! Now his **SNORING** was louder than a marching band.



I sighed. I was tired, too. I tried putting my **pillow** over my head, but I could still hear him.

I turned this way and that, curling my tail around my ears to try to block out the sound. But I just couldn't sleep.

I was lying there with my **EYES** wide open when I noticed something.

Someone had **SLIPPED** an envelope **UNDER** the door. But who?

My whiskers were shivering with suspense. I quickly opened the *envelope* and scanned the note inside.



IF YOU BELIEVE IN THE MONSTER
WHO LIVES IN THE LAKE, COME
DOWN TO THE SHORE BEFORE
DAWN BREAKS. IN FRONT OF THE
CASTLE RUINS, YOU WILL GET TO
SEE THE MONSTER – IN ALL OF
HIS BEAUTY!

SIGNED,
A FRIEND OF YOURS

Something smelled **fishier** than
day-old tuna. This **anonymouse** note
told me so many details about the
MONSTER appearing!

CLUE 3

**Why does Geronimo think there's
something suspicious about the note?**

A BUMPY RIDE



SUDDENLY, Stevie woke up. Instantly, he was clicking his **FLASH** button. “Where’s the monster? Take me to him!”

I showed him the note. We decided we couldn’t miss this chance to see the monster **ourselves**.

Outside, it was **really foggy**. We ran into **MR. SWEETWATER** in front of the hotel. “Can I give you a paw, Mr. Stilton?” he asked.

“We need to get to the other side of the **lake**, but our car is out of gas,” I

explained to him.

“Can you drive a motorcycle?”

“**I can!**” said Stevie.

The hotel manager smirked. “Don’t worry, Mr. Stilton, it will only cost you a little bit extra, *heh heh heh. . . .*”

A few minutes later, I was buckled into the **SIDECAR** of an ancient motorcycle



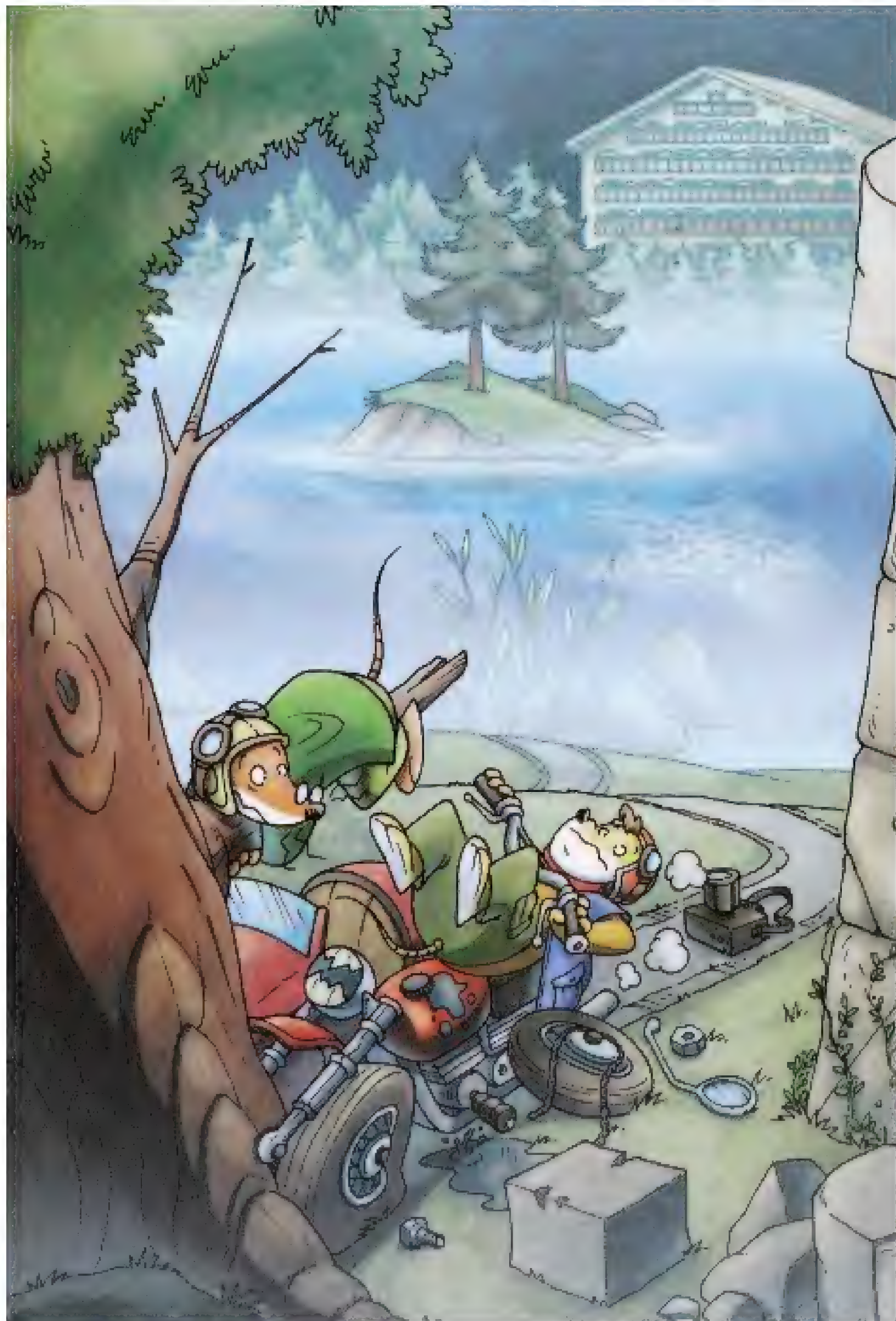
as it zoomed over the **bumpy** dirt road that circled the lake. **Stevie** was in the driver's seat.

When we arrived at the other side of the lake, in front of the castle ruins, Stevie tried to **Brake** — but ended up **crashing** into an oak tree!

WHAT A CAT-ASTROPHE!!!

The motorcycle was totaled, but we were okay, thank goodmouse! And we'd made it. We were the **ONLY ONES** there! Now we just had to hope that the **MYSTERIOUS** note told the truth.

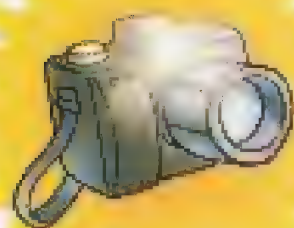
Suddenly, the lake water began to **bubble**. We could see something dark moving under the surface. . . .



THE MONSTER'S TAIL

A long, thick tail

suddenly burst
through the water's surface!



"Hurry, Stevie!" I yelled.
"Shoot! Shoot!"

At that moment, a dozen
other flashes went off. A
herd of photographers popped out of the
BRUSH. Everyone **RACED** for the lake
as if they had a pack of hungry cats on
their tails. **SALLY'S** photographer Ricky
Zoomson pushed me so hard I ended
up **in the water**! The monster's
twitching tail missed me by a **WHISKER**.

I thrashed and splashed my way back to shore. By then, the **MONSTER** had disappeared under the waves once more.

The author of the **mysterious** note had tricked me. He had given everyone the same information. **THERE WENT MY EXCLUSIVE!**



A STRANGE PHOTO

We returned to the hotel on paw. Mr. Sweetwater greeted us with his usual smarmy **smile**. “Mr. Stilton, how’d you do on the motorcycle? *Heh heh heh!*”

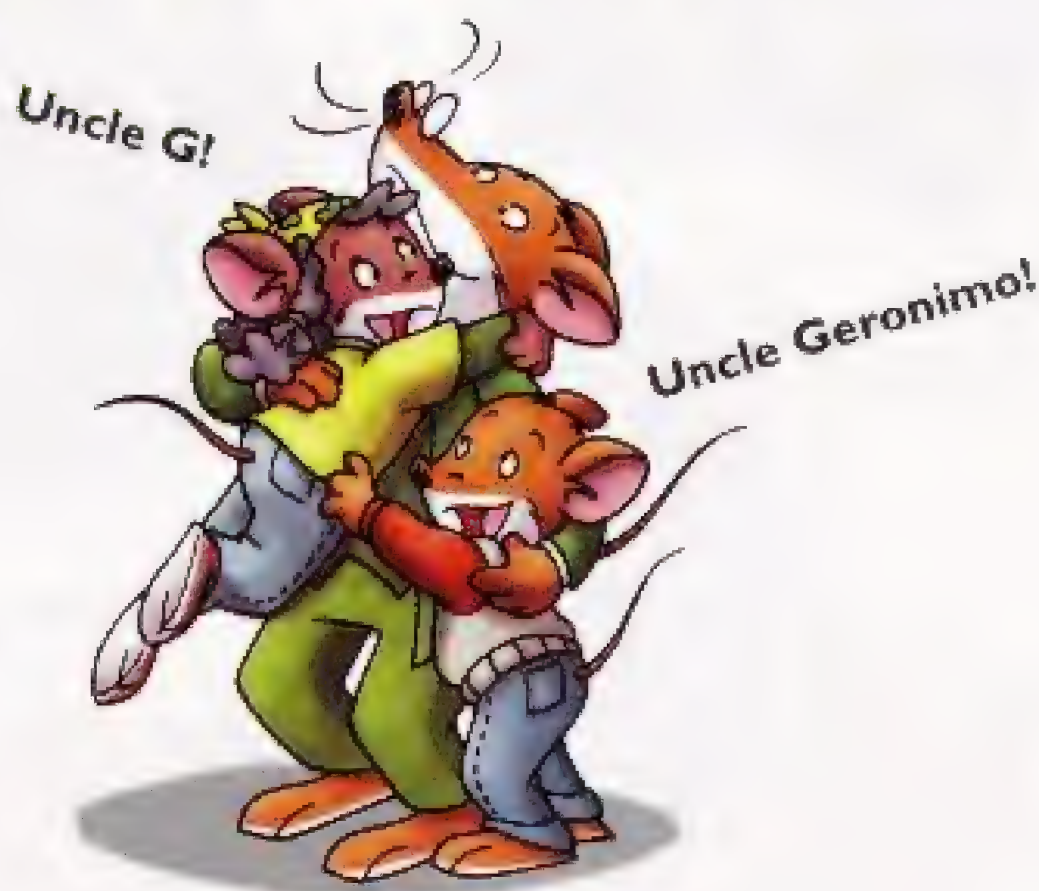
I turned **pinker** than a naked mole rat. “Well, you see . . . that is . . . we got into a bit of a **WRECK**. . . .”

“Oh, don’t worry about it,” Mr. Sweetwater jeered. “We’ll get it fixed in the blink of a cat’s eye. It’ll just cost you *a little bit* extra, *heh heh heh!*”

We went up to our room. While Stevie developed the **ROLLS** of film, I

collapsed on my straw mattress and tried to get some sleep.

An hour later, we headed downstairs for breakfast. Thea was there with Benjamin and Bugsy, who **hugged** me. **Petunia** bounced over to me as well. “This place is a marvemouse **natural oasis**! We absolutely must prevent



anyone from **ruining** it. Especially now that the news about the **LAKE MONSTER** is everywhere."

"Did you get a photo of the **MONSTER**?"

Benjamin asked.

I showed them the



photos. “Yes! Well, sort of . . .”

“You can see the monster in this one!” exclaimed **Bugsy Wugsy**. Or at least part of him . . .”

Stevie and I took a **closer** look. “See — I never botch my shot!” he exclaimed triumphantly.



I **gazed** and **gazed** at the photo: Something about the monster’s *tail* seemed odd. But what?

CLUE 4

What looks odd about
the monster’s tail?

THE RAT RACE

The next day, every newspaper on Mouse Island had a **HUGE** headline about the Lake Monster on its front page. And they all **PRINTED** better photos than ours!

When my cell phone rang, I knew right away who it would be: **Grandfather William.**

“What is this rubbish we published, Grandson?!” he screeched. “You better not be cramping **Stevie's** style!”

“No, Grandfather, it's just that —”

“**NO EXCUSES!** Tomorrow I want a photo that's good enough to fill the entire

front page. Do you hear me? **MOVE IT! GET THE PICTURE! GO!**”

When I ran into Sally Ratmousen, she waved the second **special edition** of *The Daily Rat* under my snout. “Watch and learn, Stilton, watch and learn! At *The Daily Rat*, we don’t settle for a measly picture of a monster’s tail! It’s all or nothing, I say! This is a rat race, after all!”



When I looked at Sally's newspaper, I felt my heart sink all the way to my **PAWS**.

Suddenly, **BENJAMIN** exclaimed, "But this photo couldn't have been taken by **Ricky Zoomson**! Look where the castle ruins are. . . ."

We looked more closely at Sally's newspaper. **BENJAMIN was right!**

This whole story was starting to stink worse than rotten Gouda. It was time to uncover the **truth!**

CLUE 5

Why couldn't Ricky Zoomson have taken this photo with the other photographers?

THE DAILY RAT

THE LAKE MONSTER!



THE SECOND ANONYMOUS NOTE

That night was even worse than the one before. Stevie was **SNORING** loud enough to wake a comatose cat. I just couldn't sleep!

All at once, I had a brilliant **idea**: I could figure out whom I'd heard in the room near the bathroom.

I went **DOWN** to the first floor. As soon as I entered the bathroom, I heard squeaking from the room next door.

"What do you mean, we need to go back **underwater**?"

"Well, the tail wasn't supposed to be

visible yesterday! It was all because of that **CLUMSY** rodent who fell into the lake. This time, the **MONSTER'S HEAD WILL RISE** out of the water. . . .”

They were the same voices as before! And they were squeaking about me!

I **peeked** through the keyhole and saw two rodents dressed in scuba gear.

Strange, very strange! I was sure I had seen those two before, but



couldn't remember where.

I crept out of the bathroom to follow them, but they had already disappeared.

Discouraged, I climbed back to the **ATTIC**. That was when I saw another *envelope* by the door.

IF YOU WANT TO BEAT YOUR
RIVAL,
MAKE SUNRISE THE TIME OF
YOUR ARRIVAL.
TAKE HEART AND COME DOWN TO
THE SWAMP
IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE
MONSTER ROMP!

SIGNED,
A FRIEND OF YOURS

MOUSEYBACK RIDE ON THE MONSTER

Just before sunup, Stevie and I again stood at the entrance to the **GOLDEN CATFISH**.

SAMUEL SWEETWATER was also there, and asked me his usual question: “Can I give you a paw with anything, Mr. Stilton? *Heh heh heh!*”



“Can you tell me how to reach the **SWAMP**?” I asked timidly.

Mr. Sweetwater smirked as he replied, “Oh, it’s easy. Just follow that path for about a mile. A **TANDEM** bicycle might get you there quicker. It’ll cost you . . .”

“I know, I know,” I said, rolling my eyes. “Just **a little bit** extra!”

After Stevie and I had pedaled for



about five minutes, the bike began to **sink** into the mud. We had to continue through the muck by paw. **Blech!**

The fog was so thick we could hardly see our paws. Then suddenly, the monster's back **emerged** from the water!

"Quick, Stevie! **Shoot!**" I shouted.

"**Where? Where? WHERE?**" he cried, taking pictures at random.

"Over there, on the **lake!**"

Once again, other **photographers** poked their snouts out of the shrubs and headed straight for the **MONSTER**. And Ricky Zoomson pushed me into the water **AGAIN!**

I was flailing around, when suddenly



the monster came up from the depths —
and I found myself **on its back!**

“Stevie, **TAKE THE PICTUUUUURE!**”

I screeched. I was scared out of my fur.

The last thing I saw was the flash
from his camera — at that moment, the
monster flung me toward shore!

“AAAAHHHHH!”



WHAT HAPPENED?

When I woke up, I was back at the hotel.

“How are you feeling, Uncle Geronimo?” Benjamin asked.

“All right,” I mumbled, opening my eyes. “What happened?”

“You **RODE** the Lake Monster,” Benjamin said. “Look!” He showed me the front page of *The Rodent’s Gazette* with **MY** picture front and center.

“You see?” Stevie said **proudly**. “I told you I never botch my shot!”

“You were very **COURAGEOUS**, G!” said Petunia, making me blush. She

is such a *fascinating mouse*!

My cell phone rang. As soon as I answered it, I heard Grandfather William's voice squawking: "Grandson, what a photo! Have you seen it? Snapson is **worth his weight in cheese**! I want more photos just like that, but clearer! Do you hear me? **MOVE IT! SNAP THOSE PICS!**"



TAKE A LOOK-SEE!

Well, Grandfather was **happy**, so at last I could relax! Thank goodmouse.

My relief didn't last long, since Sally Ratmousen soon burst into the room. "Stilton! **Congratulations!** You took a really nice photo!"

"Thank you, **Sally**," I responded with satisfaction. "As you can see, my **newspaper** is just as good as yours!"

"Oh, of course," she replied. "But my **photographer** is even better than yours. Didn't I tell you that I am always right? Take a look-see!" She shoved a



close-up photo of the **MONSTER'S FACE**
under my snout. "That monster is mine,
and I won't let you have him!"

With that, she left.

SLAMMING

the door behind her.

ANOTHER SLEEPLESS NIGHT

Stevie snored again that night. He was loud enough to wake a dead rat. As usual, I wasn't able to sleep a **wink**!

My mind was racing like a hamster on a wheel. I thought about the story of the monster, our attempts to photograph him, **sally's** scoop, Mr. Sweetwater's strange behavior, and those two suspicious rodents in the room next to the bathroom. **I WAS SO CONFUSED. . . .**

But I knew I needed to find those two rodents! I got out of bed, crept down the stairs, and headed into the bathroom.

It was then that my **LUCK** changed. From the room next door I could hear squeaks that I knew quite well by now. **"But, Sally, that's too dangerous!"**

"I don't care!" Sally replied. "Are you telling me that simpleton Stilton can climb on the monster and I can't?! I want to be in a picture sitting astride the monster! **RIGHT now! At once!**"



“Okay, Sally, we’ll meet at the center of the lake at **MIDNIGHT** on the dot,” said Mr. Sweetwater. “You two, go get ready.”

“You better not be late, not even by a minute — or else! Now get out, you **cheeseheads!**”

Then I saw **Sally** and Samuel Sweetwater leave the room, followed by the two scuba divers. At last, I’d figured out who they were!

I ran to wake up Thea, Petunia, Benjamin, Buggy Wuggy, and Stevie. It was our turn to **JOIN THE ACTION!**

CLUE 6

**Do you recognize the two
scuba divers?**

A SURPRISE FROM THE SKY

An hour later, Stevie and I were in a life raft, smack-dab in the middle of the lake, waiting for the **MONSTER** to appear. It was a moonless *night*.

My tail was trembling with fright!

After a few minutes of silence, we heard the thrum of a **motorboat**



approaching at top speed. Its lights were off, so the rodents on board couldn't see us. But we could hear their *voices*.

"Hurry up! I don't want to catch a cold out here on your *chilly* lake!"

"Stay *calm*, Sally — Zip and Zap will be here any moment. *Heh heh heh!*"

"They better be!" Sally snapped. "Now, *Ricky*, try to get the shot this time. I'm tired of having to retouch your **abominable** photos!"

Suddenly, we heard a *rumbling* in the distance. The monster was approaching from the bottom of the *lake!*

"Get ready to shoot, Stevie, but only when I say so!" I whispered.



“**Snapson** never botches his shot!” he declared, standing up with his camera.

At that moment, a **wave** from the monster made the raft rock, and Stevie went snoutdown into the water! He hit the **FLASH** button on his way in, and the surface of the lake lit up.

Naturally, Sally noticed us. “*Stilton!*” she yelled. “Don’t you know when to

throw in the cheesecloth?”

I didn't answer — I was too busy trying to fish Stevie out of the lake!

Meanwhile, the **MONSTER** was getting closer. Just when it seemed like we were about to end up as his food, a **HELICOPTER** appeared above us. It was Thea and Petunia!

At last, I managed to pull Stevie back onto the **raft**, but by now the monster was practically on top of us!

That was when a **ROPE** ladder fell out of the helicopter and into my paws. Stevie and I grabbed it. We escaped the monster by a **WHISKER**!



THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Incredibly, Stevie had managed to photograph the **MONSTER** underwater!

“See? Snapson never botches his shot! Never!” he boasted.

The next day, the photo was on the front page of *The Rodent’s Gazette*. In the article that accompanied it, I explained what that **SCOUNDREL** Samuel Sweetwater had done.

The monster was a **FAKE**! Samuel Sweetwater had cooked up this monstrous **SCAM** to get more tourists to come to the lake. He hoped to expand his hotel and

1st Swiss Comic Con
Palm Mall 1997



THE RODENT'S GAZETTE

MECHANICAL MONSTER

The secret of the Lake Monster is revealed underwater!



By the way, the monster was seen in the lake of Geneva in 1959. It was a large, red, cylindrical object with a conical nose and a tail. It was seen by a group of people who were fishing in the lake. The monster was seen for about 10 minutes and then disappeared. It was a very strange sight and many people believe it was a real monster. However, some people think it was just a piece of machinery. The secret of the Lake Monster is revealed underwater!

1. The monster was seen in the lake of Geneva in 1959.
2. It was a large, red, cylindrical object with a conical nose and a tail.
3. It was seen by a group of people who were fishing in the lake.
4. The monster was seen for about 10 minutes and then disappeared.
5. It was a very strange sight and many people believe it was a real monster.
6. However, some people think it was just a piece of machinery.
7. The secret of the Lake Monster is revealed underwater!

make **a small fortune**.

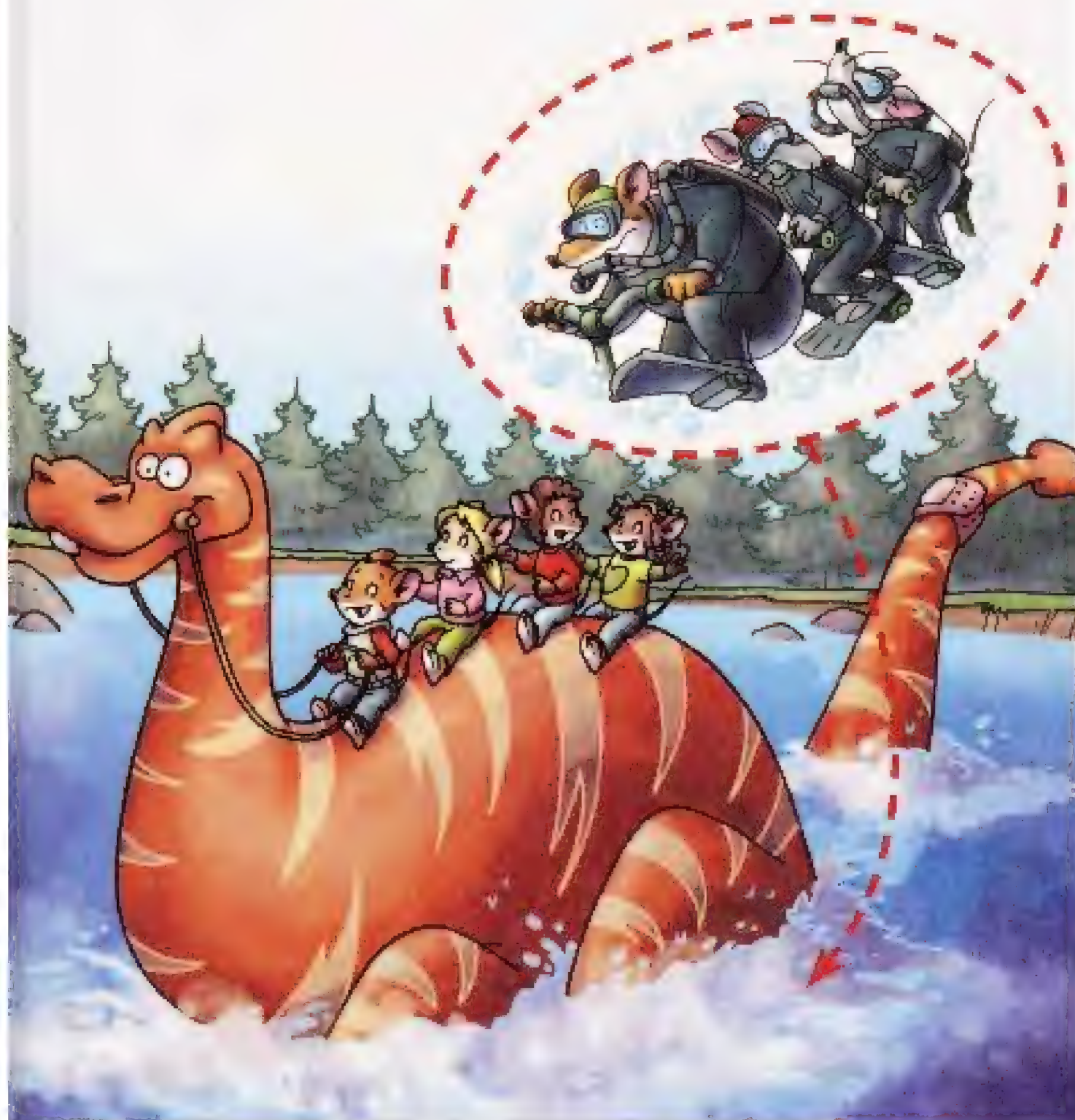
And **sally**? Well, with the exclusive to the story, her newspaper would have **SOLD** millions of copies. But instead, it was *The Rodent's Gazette* that set a new sales record!

Samuel and Sally had to go to **court** to face fraud charges. A judge made them pay a **huge** fine. Thanks to a suggestion from Petunia, the money was used to help build a magnificent **natural park** at the lake. It became a wildlife preserve where rodents can play, hike, and go bike riding, **WITHOUT DANGER!**

Can you guess what the park's main **attraction** is? **Riding around**

the lake on the monster's back!

And guess who does all the pedaling to power the monster: Samuel Sweetwater, Zip, and Zap!





YOU'RE THE INVESTIGATOR!

DID YOU FIGURE OUT THE CLUES?

- 1** What did Samuel Sweetwater say about the monster that seemed a bit strange?

He said that he had seen it "last week," but Sally reported that the monster had first been seen just the day before.

- 2** Before Sally left, what did she say that was strange?

She said the monster would appear at dawn. How could she possibly know that?

- 3** Why does Geronimo think there's something suspicious about the note?

Because the author of the note knew where and when the monster would appear. How could he or she know that?

- 4** What looks odd about the monster's tail?

There's a bandage on the monster's tail! It's broken, just like the two rodents in the room next to the bathroom said.

- 5** Why couldn't Ricky Zoomson have taken this photo with the other photographers?

In the background you can see the castle ruins, but Ricky Zoomson was on the shore in front of the ruins. Therefore, this photo was taken at a different time and from a different spot on the lakeshore.

- 6** Do you recognize the two scuba divers?

They are Zip and Zap!

HOW MANY QUESTIONS DID YOU ANSWER CORRECTLY?

ALL 5 CORRECT: You are a **SUPER-SQUEAKY INVESTIGATOR!**



FROM 2 TO 4 CORRECT: You are a **SUPER INVESTIGATOR!** You'll get that added squeak soon!



LESS THAN 2 CORRECT: You are a **GOOD INVESTIGATOR!** Keep practicing to get super-squeaky!



Farewell until the next mystery!

Geronimo Stilton

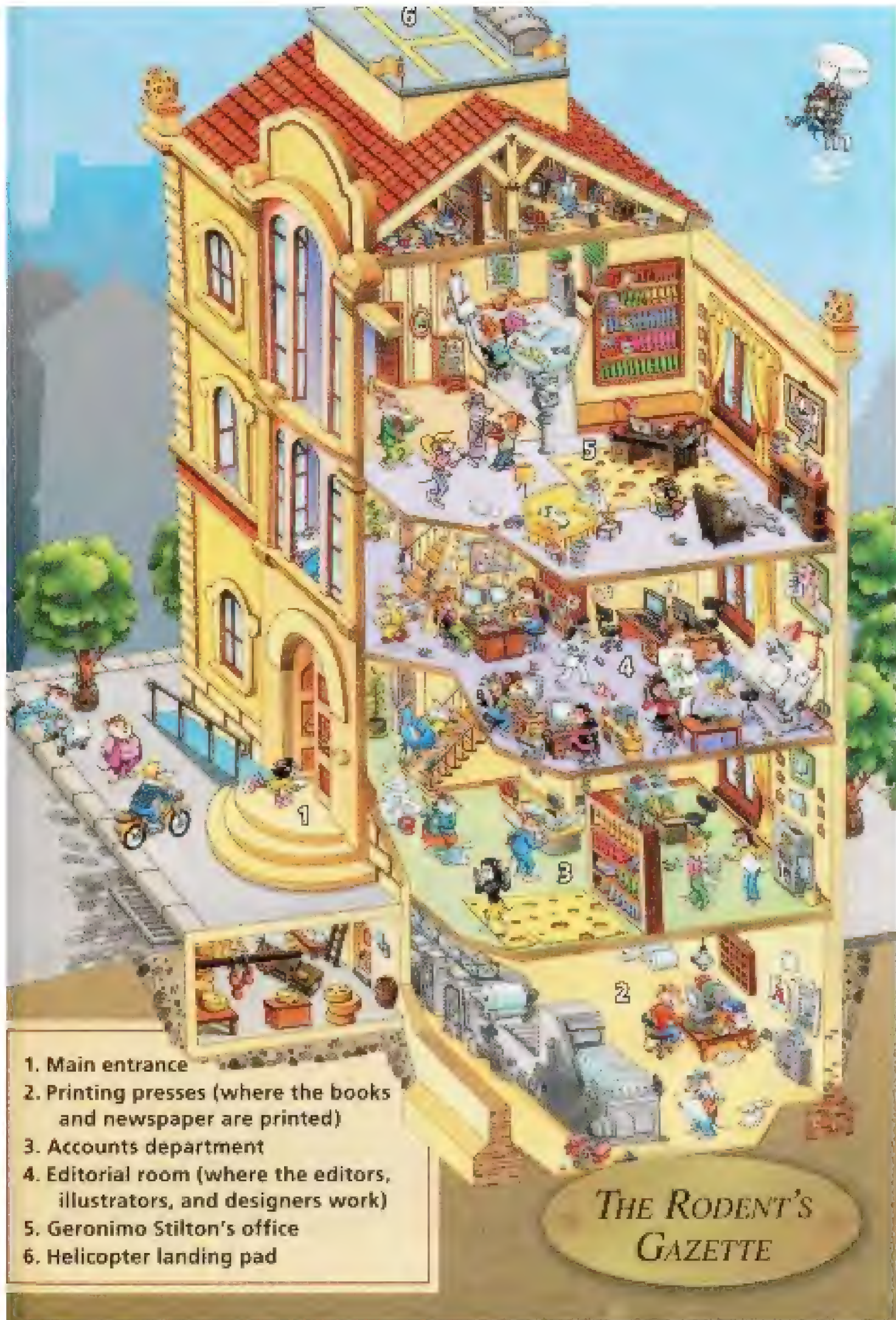
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Born in New Mouse City, Mouse Island, **GERONIMO STILTON** is Rattus Emeritus of Mousomorphic Literature and of Neo-Ratonic Comparative Philosophy. For the past twenty years, he has been running *The Rodent's Gazette*, New Mouse City's most widely read daily newspaper.

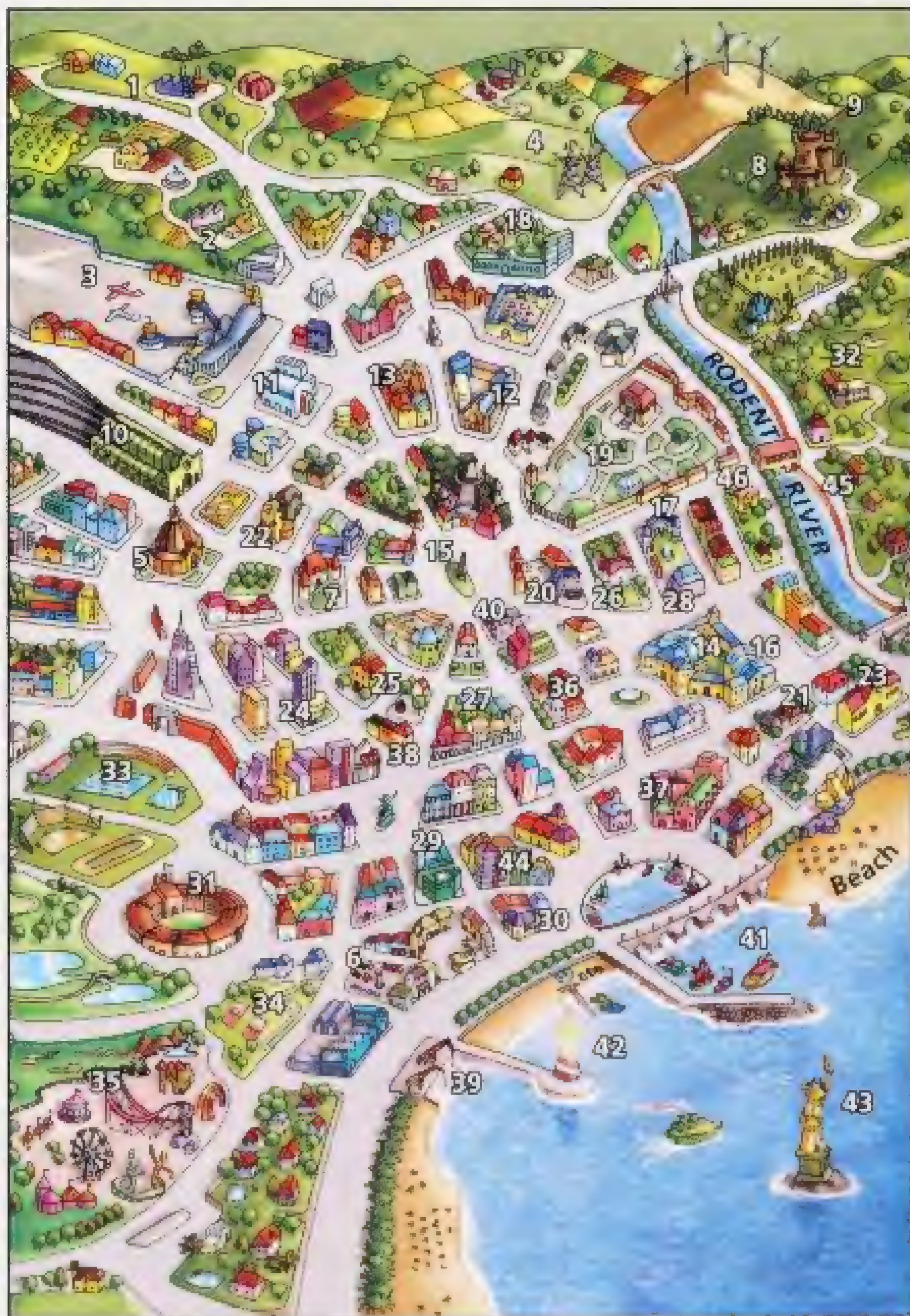
Stilton was awarded the Ratitzer Prize for his scoops on *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid* and *The Search for Sunken Treasure*. He has also received the Andersen 2000 Prize for Personality of the Year. One of his bestsellers won the 2002 eBook Award for world's best ratlings' electronic book. His works have been published all over the globe.

In his spare time, Mr. Stilton collects antique cheese rinds and plays golf. But what he most enjoys is telling stories to his nephew Benjamin.



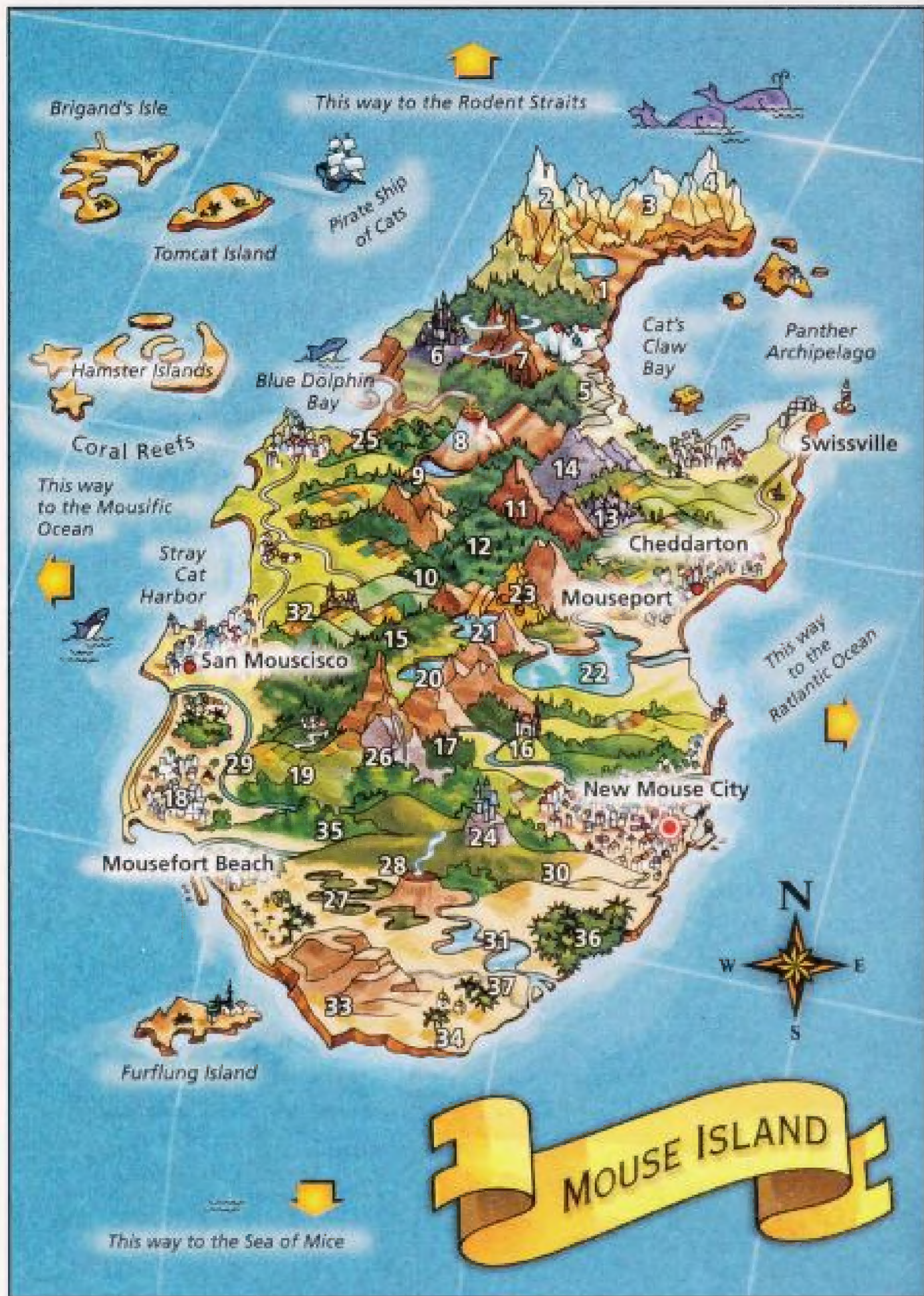
1. Main entrance
2. Printing presses (where the books and newspaper are printed)
3. Accounts department
4. Editorial room (where the editors, illustrators, and designers work)
5. Geronimo Stilton's office
6. Helicopter landing pad

*THE RODENT'S
GAZETTE*



Map of New Mouse City

1. Industrial Zone
2. Cheese Factories
3. Angorat International Airport
4. WRAT Radio and Television Station
5. Cheese Market
6. Fish Market
7. Town Hall
8. Snotnose Castle
9. The Seven Hills of Mouse Island
10. Mouse Central Station
11. Trade Center
12. Movie Theater
13. Gym
14. Catnegie Hall
15. Singing Stone Plaza
16. The Gouda Theater
17. Grand Hotel
18. Mouse General Hospital
19. Botanical Gardens
20. Cheap Junk for Less (Trap's store)
21. Parking Lot
22. Mouseum of Modern Art
23. University and Library
24. *The Daily Rat*
25. *The Rodent's Gazette*
26. Trap's House
27. Fashion District
28. The Mouse House Restaurant
29. Environmental Protection Center
30. Harbor Office
31. Mousidon Square Garden
32. Golf Course
33. Swimming Pool
34. Blushing Meadow Tennis Courts
35. Curlyfur Island Amusement Park
36. Geronimo's House
37. Historic District
38. Public Library
39. Shipyard
40. Thea's House
41. New Mouse Harbor
42. Luna Lighthouse
43. The Statue of Liberty
44. Hercule Poirat's Office
45. Petunia Pretty Paws's House
46. Grandfather William's House



Map of Mouse Island

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Big Ice Lake | 21. Lake Lakelake |
| 2. Frozen Fur Peak | 22. Lake Lakelakelake |
| 3. Slipperyslopes Glacier | 23. Cheddar Crag |
| 4. Coldcreeps Peak | 24. Cannycat Castle |
| 5. Ratzikistan | 25. Valley of the Giant Sequoia |
| 6. Transratania | 26. Cheddar Springs |
| 7. Mount Vamp | 27. Sulfurous Swamp |
| 8. Roastedrat Volcano | 28. Old Reliable Geyser |
| 9. Brimstone Lake | 29. Vole Vale |
| 10. Poopedcat Pass | 30. Ravingrat Ravine |
| 11. Stinko Peak | 31. Gnat Marshes |
| 12. Dark Forest | 32. Munster Highlands |
| 13. Vain Vampires Valley | 33. Mousehara Desert |
| 14. Goose Bumps Gorge | 34. Oasis of the Sweaty Camel |
| 15. The Shadow Line Pass | 35. Cabbagehead Hill |
| 16. Penny Pincher Castle | 36. Rattytrap Jungle |
| 17. Nature Reserve Park | 37. Rio Mosquito |
| 18. Las Ratayas Marinas | |
| 19. Fossil Forest | |
| 20. Lake Lake | |



Dear mouse friends,
Thanks for reading, and farewell
until the next mystery!



Geronimo Stilton

**CASE
CLOSED!**